



WESTFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT

VEHICLE BURGLARY AND THEFT ADVISORY



Vehicle burglaries and thefts remain a persistent criminal problem in Westfield. Here is the latest information to keep you apprised.

WHAT IS KNOWN?

- **QUANTITY:** In the first quarter of 2021, there were 26 vehicle burglaries and six vehicle thefts reported in Westfield. In every single instance, those vehicles reported stolen were unlocked with their key fobs left inside at the time of the thefts.
- Within the last week, four additional vehicle thefts and numerous more vehicle burglaries and attempted vehicle burglaries were reported.
 - In one incident, which occurred on the 500 block of Highland Avenue, the stolen vehicle was unlocked with its key fob left inside at the time of the theft.
 - In the other three incidents (300 block of Hillside Avenue, the 10 block of Bennett Place, and the 500 block of Coddington Road), homes were entered to retrieve the key fobs to vehicles. Force was used to enter the home located on Hillside Avenue.
 - In another incident, one more home, which was located on the 300 block of Hazel Avenue, was forcibly entered in an attempt to retrieve a key fob for a vehicle. This attempt was not successful, as the resident immediately dialed 9-1-1 and initiated a police response.
- **NEIGHBORHOODS:** Those neighborhoods with easy access to Route 22 and the Parkway have been specifically targeted, but there has been an increase in this criminal activity in all four wards of Westfield.
- **PATTERN:** Perpetrators are entering Westfield in stolen vehicles, looking to commit additional vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts. Many of the stolen vehicles are being used in the commission of violent crimes elsewhere, in particular Essex County.
- **LOCATION:** Vehicles are being stolen from both streets and driveways – even those parked in driveways and hidden well behind homes. This makes perpetrators unseen to passing police patrols.

WHAT POLICE ARE DOING?

- **INCREASED POLICE PATROLS:** Enhanced police patrols have been initiated in all neighborhoods and will remain in effect until further notice. These intensive police patrols include both very obvious and less overt measures, and numerous other vehicle burglaries and thefts have been thwarted as a result. **Just because you don't see the police, does not mean they aren't out there!**
- **POLICE PURSUITS:** There have been several resulting high speed police pursuits as stolen vehicles attempt to flee Westfield – all of which can present great danger, not only to police officers, but potentially to the general public as well.
- **LAW ENFORCEMENT INVESTIGATIONS:** Police process every recovered vehicle for latent fingerprints and DNA evidence, which has resulted in several arrests. Every single vehicle reported stolen in 2021 has been quickly recovered by police.
- **LAW ENFORCEMENT COORDINATION:** Vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts remain an ongoing criminal problem, not just in Westfield, but also in many other suburban Union County municipalities. Police continue to work in close coordination with other local, county and state law enforcement agencies, in particular the New Jersey State Police Auto Theft Task Force, to identify, charge, and apprehend perpetrators. Westfield is presently the only Union County police department to have assigned a Detective to the New Jersey State Police Auto Theft Task Force full-time, thus assuring Westfield cases are always given the highest priority.
- **PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS:** Police use ward-specific Nixle groups to advise residents of vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts that occur in their neighborhoods. The Police Chief and Mayor have made repeated comments in various public forums regarding these crimes, and information is routinely released by the police to the local news media. Please visit **[westfieldnj.gov/police](https://www.westfieldnj.gov/police)** for police press releases, as well as **@WestfieldNJPD** on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for additional up-to-date communications.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **LOCK VEHICLES AND HOMES:** Above all else, hide valuables, remove key fobs and lock vehicles – not just overnight, but during daytime hours too. Lock your home doors as well. Do not leave key fobs in plain sight near entry doors. Do not make yourself an easy target!
- **REPORT TO POLICE:** Immediately report all suspicious persons, vehicles and/or activities to the police via 9-1-1. This includes any and all vehicle alarms, at any time of day, or any other unusual neighborhood activities.
- **PARK VEHICLES NEAR THE STREET:** Avoid parking vehicles towards the back of driveways and hidden behind homes. Keep them closer to the street where criminal activity can be seen, especially by passing police patrols.
- **KEEP YOURSELF AND OTHERS INFORMED:** Subscribe to the Mayor's e-mail updates at westfieldnj.gov/townupdates. Enroll in ward-specific Nixle alerts to be notified of police activity in your area by texting the key word for your ward to 888-777. Ward 1: 07090WARD1; Ward 2: 07090WARD2; Ward 3: 07090WARD3; Ward 4: 07090WARD4. Also, follow or like @WestfieldNJPD on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- **COMMUNICATE WITH NEIGHBORS:** Be sure to share this information with your neighbors. Look out for one another. Remind neighbors to secure their vehicles and homes for everyone's safety and security.

Criminal activity is always of great concern to all. Police remain fully committed to ensuring the safety and security of the entire community. Unfortunately, crimes like vehicle burglaries and vehicle thefts are not new and have persisted from time to time over the years. While police cannot fully stop them, they can displace them – but only by working together with the community.

While police continue to make every effort and use every tool at their disposal to address crime, residents also have a significant role to play in keeping Westfield one of New Jersey's safest towns. Fighting crime is a partnership between the police and the community.

Thank you for doing your part!